

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, KS, US

SUBJECT: SCHLESINGER TESTIMONY ON AMERICAN FORCES IN KOREA

1. KOREAN AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE WEEKEND PRESS GAVE FRONT PAGE HEADLINE COVERAGE TO DOD SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S TESTIMONY BEFORE HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE THAT THERE IS POSSIBILITY AMERICAN FORCES WILL GRADUALLY BE PULLED OUT OF KOREA WITH THEIR ROLE BEING TAKEN UP BY "MOBILE RESERVE FORCES." RELYING LARGELY ON WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE OF MARCH 1 AS SOURCE, PRESS ALSO REPORTED SECDEF'S REJECTION OF "A SHARP, SUDDEN WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS," WHICH COULD HAVE POLITICAL DESTABILIZING EFFECT IN REGION. PAPERS POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS FIRST PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT ON POSSIBLE REDEPLOYMENT AMERICAN FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA SINCE 1971 WHEN U.S. WITHDREW A DIVISION.

2. PAPERS ALSO QUOTED PENTAGON SPOKESMAN FREIDHEIM'S STATEMENT ABOUT SECRETARY SCHLESINGER'S REMARKS IN SAME EDITIONS THAT CARRIED SCHLESINGER STORY. FREIDHEIM REPORTED AS SAYING THAT DOD SECRETARY'S TESTIMONY DOES NOT MEAN ANY IMMEDIATE CHANGE IN DEPLOYMENT OF U.S. FORCES TO KOREA AND WEST PACIFIC AND MAKING CLEAR THAT U.S. HAS NO PLAN AT THIS MOMENT FOR REDEPLOYMENT OF U.S. FORCES FROM KOREA. REPORTS SAY FREIDHEIM ADDED THAT WHEN TIME COMES TO CONSIDER CHANGE U.S. WILL CONSULT WITH ROKG.

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3. SUNDAY PAPERS ALSO PLAYED ROK FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT THAT U.S. CERTAIN TO HAVE FULL CONSULTATIONS WITH KOREA IF WASHINGTON HAS ANY SUCH PLANS. DIRECTOR MOFA AMERICAN AFFAIRS BUREAU LEE SONG-OK QUOTED TO EFFECT THAT NO U.S. FORCES WILL BE WITHDRAWN IN FY 1974 AND THAT SCHLESINGER TESTIMONY "MUST BE AN IDEA BUT NOT A PLAN OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT."

4. PRESS EDITORIALS HAVE EXPRESSED OBVIOUS COOLNESS TOWARD IDEA WITHOUT SHOWING TOO MUCH SURPRISE OR CONCERN OVER IT. MOST CONCLUDED THAT TESTIMONY WAS UNTIMELY COMING AS IT DID IN MIDST CURRENT NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSIVE ACTIONS AND AFFIRMED NEED FOR U.S. TROOP PRESENCE UNTIL AGREEMENT ASSURING PEACE ON KOREAN PENINSULA WORKED OUT.

CHOSUN ILBO SAID IDEA CERTAINLY BEING CONSIDERED AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE WITHDRAWAL OF AMERICAN TROOPS IN KOREA, BUT DOESN'T SEEM TO MEAN ANY BASIC CHANGE IN U.S. STRATEGY IN DEFENSE OF ROKG. PRO-GOVERNMENT KYONG HYANG SUNMUN ONLY PAPER WHICH SHARPLY AND DIRECTLY CRITICIZED SECDEF TESTIMONY.
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